

*A KISS, no Excuse for a  
GREAT MAN's living in  
Adultery :*

BEING A

S E R M O N

Preached at

St. *MARTIN's*,

ON

PROV. vii. 13—16—22.

*Because she caught him and kissed him, and  
with an impudent Face said unto him, — I  
have deck'd my Bed with Coverings, — He  
goeth after her straightway, as an Ox goeth  
to the Slaughter, or as a Fool to the Cor-  
rection of the Stocks.*

---

L O N D O N :

Printed for W. W E B B, 'near St. Paul's',  
1741.

[ Price Sixpence. ]





P R O V. vii. 13—16—22.

*Because she Caught him and Kissed him,  
and with an impudent Face said unto him,  
I have deck'd my Bed with Coverings, he  
goeth after her straightway, as an Ox  
goeth to the Slaughter, or as a Fool to the  
Correction of the Stocks.*



*H E Caught him, and Kissed him! — A weak Excuse this, for so enormous a Sin as the Sin of Adultery! A Sin, that is, in its Consequences, a great Destroyer of Justice, and a villainous Abuser of the Rational Faculties. A Sin, that when it receives the Sanction of the Great, diffuses itself into the Body politic, and is destructive to a Common-Wealth. A Sin that occasions Enmity between Relations, Coldness among Friends, and an utter Disregard for the Good of Society: In short, it is a Sin that is attended with so many distant Evils, as must prove the Man guilty of it (notwithstanding all his trifling Excuses) to be impair'd in his Understanding; for, says Solomon in the Sixth of Proverbs, *Who so committeth Adultery with a Woman lacketh Understanding.* Therefore the*

Man, thus void of Understanding, lays hold of this poor Excuse, foolishly hoping that it may palliate his Guilt, and cries, *She caught him, and kissed him, and with an impudent Face said unto him, I have decked my Bed with Coverings, &c.*

In treating of which Words, I shall shew, *First*, The Weakness of a Great Man's Understanding in assigning such a Reason for his going after an unlawful Object, that *She caught him and kissed him.*

*Secondly*, I shall display the Heinousness of it with regard to both Parties.

*Thirdly and lastly*, I shall bestow some Encomiums upon Virtue, as are worthy a Great Man's Observation.

*First*, then, I am to shew the Weakness of a Great Man's Understanding in assigning such a Reason for his going after an unlawful Object, that *She caught him and kissed him.*

That there is a great and manifest Weakness in any Man's Understanding in this Particular is evident : Because no Man can be guilty of this Sin, without offering Violence to the Laws of Nature, and consequently to his Understanding. Though there may be some who are guilty of it, that may not be in a like Degree culpable : For the Passion prompting to the Sin being more or less in all, precipitately attacks a Man, sometimes before he has Time to reflect on the Consequences, or to make any Use of his Intellectual



lectual Faculties. He may, perhaps, accidentally *meet with a Woman in the Attire of an Harlot, and subtile in Heart, and with her fair Speech she may straightway cause him to yield, and with the Flattering of her Lips she may force him.* But this being accidental, is a great Alleviation of the Guilt ; for before he saw her, he had no Intention or Tendency towards the Sin : She started upon him, and by her Address took such a Possession of his Senses, that his Understanding was lull'd : He perpetrates the Act, and retires : He reflects afterwards upon his Folly ; and not having sinn'd away Conscience, it strikes him like a *Dart through his Liver, as a Bird hasteth to the Snare, and knoweth not that it is for his Life.*

But the Person, who upon seeing a Woman (and knowing her to be the Property of another) invites her to his Bed ; lets her live with him, even under the same Roof with his Children and Family ; squanders away the Money upon her, which would make many of his Dependants happy ; is surly and haughty to all about him, to shew her that she only has his Esteem ; is not ashamed to appear with her on any publick Occasion ; keeps a Child at a Distance, and hugs her in his Bosom ; when Affairs call him from Home, she must go with him, and no Expence is spar'd to make the Grandeur of her Retinue equal with his own ; and last of all, confers FAVOURS upon her, which belong only to the

the Virtuous! Such a Man as this certainly must *lack Understanding*; for none but a Fool, deeply immerfed in Sensual Pleasures, would be fo weak as to offer for the Excuse of fuch a Series of ill Conduct, that because *She caught him and kissed him*, he must live in the continued Course of a Sin fo displeasing to Almighty God, and fo repugnant to his own Nature.

The Weakness of this Great Man's Understanding will ftill further appear, [if we confider, whether the Liberty he takes with this Woman be without, or with, the Consent of her Husband. If without, it is an evident Violation of another's Right, and consequently a great Injustice: If with his Consent, it must betray an abject Meanness in the Person consenting, and a consummate Weakness in the Person fuing for her; for had the Woman any Merit, her Husband must be villainous beyond Comparifon to prostitute her to another; and if fhe had none, fhe must be highly unworthy of a Great Man's Affection.

One would naturally be induc'd to think, that the Education bestowed upon a Great Man would instruct him better: For no doubt it was given him with a Design of making him capable to distinguish between Virtue and Vice; to cultivate the Intellectual Powers, and not to fuppress their Influence; to frame his Conduct by the Rules of Right Reason,

Reason, and not to suffer a fond Desire to obliterate its Laws ; to make him active and vigorous in the Business of his Station, and not to drown him in Stupidity and Ease ; to make him have a Will to do for those who have done for him, and not to make him unmindful of their Services ; to make him have a paternal Regard for his Children, and not to be alienated from them ; to inspire him with a benevolent Temper, and not to be deaf to the Complaints of others ; to extend his Charity to proper Objects, and not to let them go empty away. In fine, to have a reverential Awe of the Divine Being, and a strict Regard for Justice and Charity in his Concerns with Mankind.

*But how is the Mighty fallen ! tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the Streets of Ascalon, lest the Daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the Daughters of the Uncircumcised triumph.* For to see a Great Man continually smile at the Smiles of an Harlot ; make Use of all Occasions to give her an Opportunity to *catch him and kiss him* ; and then to urge by way of Excuse for his Compliance, that *She caught him and kissed him*, betrays such an extravagant Folly as needs no further Proof.

In pursuing this Subject I cannot help observing, that it is a great Breach of the Understanding of any Man, but especially of him whom Providence has placed in a Station, by which his Conduct is more exactly scrutinized into,



into, and his Example more liable to influence others, than those of an inferior Rank, to avoid even kissing a Married Woman, when prompted to it by any lustful Incitement : For such a Kiss must be sinful, because every Desire of Uncleaness is an Undervaluing of our Nature, by putting us upon such Practices as Right Reason will not allow of ; which must reflect a Dishonour to Soul and Body. For the Body was given us by Almighty God for the Service of the Soul in all Rational Employments, and for the Conveyance of Sensual Pleasures, as far as may make for the Preservation and comfortable Assistance of the Animal Life ; but not to employ it to such mean Purposes, not to make it a Drudge to our Lustful Desires, and to serve the Ends of Sensuality only. Nay, St. Paul (whom I presume I may venture to quote, since it is evident that some who openly live in this Sin join in our Creeds, and attend the Service of the Church in its several Offices and Sacraments) carries this Argument farther, and bids us *flee even Fornication, because our Bodies are the Temples of the Holy Ghost*. What a Dishonour is it therefore to our immortal Souls, those Ethereal Substances, to consent to such Actions as are contrary to all Natural Law and Reason ; to make them undervalue themselves so as to render them careless of their own Interest and Happiness ?

Such Beginnings, however light some People may make of them, ought particularly



to be guarded against in their Infancy, otherwise they may tend to dissolve that Harmony which is the peculiar Ornament of the Marriage-State, and which God has appointed for the Propagation of Mankind, and for mutual Assistance and Comfort in this Life. For when Men once betake themselves to these unlawful Liberties, they grow cold and indifferent to Matrimony, and take all Opportunities to despise it as an Enemy to their Pleasures and natural Freedom. But this, at the best, is but audaciously breaking out from those Fences, which Providence has made about us, and to pretend to a Freedom inconsistent with our Nature, and contrary to our Obedience. 'Tis to cassate and make void that Sacred Ordinance; to contemn and trample under Foot that primitive Institution, as old as our very State of Innocency: It is to invert the Order and Prescript of Nature, to wrest God's Dispensation out of his Hands, and to prosecute their Enjoyments upon their own Terms; and so habituate themselves to such unlawful Indulgences, that (having abandon'd all Restraint) they stick at nothing to accomplish their Desires; till at last they bring a Woman to such a Pitch of Impudence as to *catch them and kiss them*, and themselves to such a Depravity in their Understanding, as to cry out (as an Excuse for their Guilt) in the Words of the Text, *She caught him and kissed him, and with an impudent Face said unto him, I have decked my Bed with Coverings, &c.*

I come now to the second Thing I proposed to speak to, which, was to display the Folly of going after an unlawful Object, by shewing the Heinousness of the Sin with regard to both Parties.

Chastity in Matrimony is a Duty which has been accounted most Sacred and Inviolable in all Ages and Nations; and the Breach of it was never accounted a Matter of Mirth and Drollery, but among us Christians; who, nevertheless, to our Shame, profess a Religion which establishes Matrimony upon a firmer Foundation than any. Disagreement, and Inequality of Temper, or Age, are in other Religions Causes sufficient for Divorce; but our Saviour saith, *Whosoever putteth away his Wife, saving for the Cause of Fornication, causes her to commit Adultery; and he that marrieth her, committeth Adultery*, Matth. v. 32. Nay, the New Testament is full of Exhortations for making the Marriage State comfortable and happy. It engages us to conjugal Chastity by the Honour of the Duty, and the Wickedness and Punishment of the Violation of it. *Marriage is honourable in all, and the Bed undefiled; but Whoremongers and Adulterers God will judge*, Heb. xiii. 4. It enjoins a most particular Love and Affection to each: *Sr. Paul* commands the antient Women to instruct the younger ones *to be sober, and to love their Husbands*, as if none but those who did so could be sober, *Tit.* ii. 4. And in many other Places, the Husband

is

is obliged to love his Wife as Christ loved the Church, to love his Wife even as himself; which imply the highest and most ardent Degree of Love and Kindness. Therefore, they who do any ways contribute to the Breach of this Love and Fidelity, have a better Pretence to be *Turks* or *Heathens*, or any Thing, than *Christians*. But to make this Discourse of more general Use, be pleased to take a View of Adultery in its threefold Aspect.

I. Of the Adulterer of any sort whatsoever, that shall defile his Neighbour's Bed. This, besides the Uncleanneſs common to all Sins of this Nature, and the Violation of God's expreſs Commands, is an Injury ſo great and intolerable, as none but the injured Party can make a juſt Eſtimate of. How impatiently do we bear the Loſs of ſome ſmall Part of our Eſtates, the being overreached in our Dealings, and the ill Return of our Adventures? And yet, as theſe are but ſlight, ſo they are reparable Loſſes; but this is to ſpoil us of that, which all Men and all Nations have accounted moſt Sacred; this is to diſunite thoſe Affections, which have been bound together by ſo many mutual Plights and Vows, by the moſt religious Oaths, and with the moſt ſacred Solemnity; this is to introduce a ſpurious Race into a Family, to put by often the true and genuine Heirs, and to deduce an irrevocable Cheat down to all Poſterity; this is to expoſe our innocent



Friend to all the Contempt and Contumely of the World, to all the miserable Effects of a divided Family. Methinks, however Men were hurried on by the *Impetus* and Rage of their wicked Lufts; methinks, I say, meer Natural Pity, and the Tenderness of Humane Nature should keep them from acting an Injustice againſt their Neighbour, the Effects of which are ſo horribly cruel, and ſo peſtilentially injurious.

2. Of the Wickedneſs of this Sin on the part of the *Adulterous Husband*: He that hath left the *Wife of his Youth*, and followed after *ſtrange Women*, that has contemned the chaste Embraces of the Conjugal Bed, for the polluted Love of an infamous Harlot: For him to behold the criminal Blackneſs of his Sin, 'tis but the Caſting his Eyes back upon thoſe ſacred Engagements they made to each other before they entred into this Holy Order; to recollect thoſe Vows and Proteſtations then interchangeably made, ſo uttered, and ſo repeated with the moſt earneſt and moſt endearing Accents; let him remember thoſe ſolemn Promiſes made before Almighty God, in the Face of his People; thoſe Hands then joined together by the Miniſter in Token of an indiſſoluble Band, and an uninterrupted Amity; and then let him conſider how monſtrouſly criminal it is to break thro' all theſe Tyes and Obligations, and to proſecute a Luſt which is attended with all this Perfidiousneſs



ness and Perjury. Let him consider farther, how ungrateful and ungenerous it is then thus to slight and despise her who quitted *her Father's House, and left her Mother that gave her Suck*, to take Sanctuary in his Bosom, and to live under his Protection; thus to neglect and contemn her, that had always lived with him in an inviolable Loyalty, and unspotted Duty and Affection, and a constant Care and Tenderneſs; that has, besides, adorned his Bed with a numerous Off-spring, so that *his Children flourish like Olive-Branches round about his Table*: Now, after all this, for him thus vilely to have abused his good Co-partner in every Fortune, it manifests him guilty of the most wicked Treachery, the foulest Ingratitude, and to have a Soul sunk to the lowest Degree of Baseness and Inhumanity. Add to this the constant Troubles and Vexations in such a Family, the Disobedience of the Children, and the Coldness of their Love to such a Father, the daily Disquiet of the more innocent and unknowing Babes, that were wont to sympathize with their disconsolate Mother, the growing Wickedness of their riper Children, that will be too apt to imitate the Example of so lewd a Parent: But I shall conclude this Particular with that memorable Passage in the Prophet *Mala-chi*: *The Lord hath been Witness between thee and the Wife of thy Youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously; yet she was thy Companion, and the Wife of thy Covenant. And did he not make one? yet had he the Residue of the Spirit;*

*Spirit ; and wherefore one ? That he might seek a godly Seed : Therefore take heed to your Spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the Wife of thy Youth, Mal. ii. 14.*

3. Of the Wickedness of this Sin on the Part of the *Adulterous Wife*. Whatever Guilt is contracted by the Adulterous Husband, the same is imputable to the Adulterous Wife, because of the Mutualness of their Matrimonial Promises, and their other Obligations to a mutual Gratitude. But on the Woman's Side, that is guilty of this Crime, there supervenes an additional Wickedness. She, before she can arrive at this Pitch of Impiety, must offer Violence to her Nature, break thro' all the Fences of her natural Modesty, and steel her Forehead with the most harden'd Impudence. She is not only guilty of the Breach of so many Oaths and Vows of Ingratitude to her kind Protector and Cherisher, but is perfidiously disloyal to her Head and Superior, to whom she owes so much Observance and Obedience ; for whose Sake she ought, not only to maintain her Chastity entire, but even an unspotted and unquestionable Reputation ; and therefore, to defile his Bed with the Embraces of an impure Adulterer, is not only an Injury, but a most scandalous, base and impious Conspiracy. But the horrid Consequences of the Fact set her Crime above all Estimation ; to Bastardize a Family, and perhaps to wrong her own Children of their Paternal Inheritance ; to take off the Father's  
Love

Love from his own Children, and make him look upon them all as an uncertain, if not a spurious Progeny ; to cause him to deny a sufficient Maintenance even to his true-born Sons, and perhaps to leave them poor and succourless in the midst of his Affluence. These are such miserable and fatal Events of this Crime, that she who, notwithstanding all this, shall engage in it, must, one would think, have divested herself of all the Tenderneſs of her Sex, and have put on a sort of devilish Cruelty, thus to offer to him, in requital of his Love and Kindneſs, ſuch an irreparable and ſupportable Injury.

I ſhall not here nicely examine upon what Account Mankind alone, of all the Creation, has acquired that Modeſty and Shame-facedneſs about *Veneral Matters*, altho' I cannot ſubſcribe to ſome Opinions, who will have it only to proceed from Cuſtom and Deſign, to raiſe our Appetites the higher after thoſe Things which we ſee purpoſely hid from us ; but I think rather, that it aroſe chiefly from the Lapse of Mankind, who were not till then *aſhamed of their Nakedneſs*, till Sin had raiſed in them ſuch diſorderly Appetites and Inclinations, to which they were greater Strangers before ; at the Thoughts whereof they were confounded themſelves, and endeavoured, as much as they could, to hide them from the Knowledge of others. But be this as it will, every Man finds within himſelf a natural Deſire to ſcreen over with Silence  
every



every thing in relation to these Matters ; and we see that those People who have laid aside this natural Shame-facedness, and given themselves up to *obscene Talk* and *Actions*, have been always accounted some of the greatest Monsters in Nature, that have offer'd more Violence to her, than any Men beside. And therefore it is observed, that in all civiliz'd Nations this Practice has been used only by the meanest and basest sort of People ; but those of a more refined Education have had the utmost Abhorrence of it. And we may farther observe, that nothing is so great a Guard to Virtue as Modesty ; for we oftentimes see, that when Vice has made itself Master of all the other Fences, this holds out till the very last : And therefore Men should be very cautious of abandoning that Hold which is oftentimes stronger than Reason and Grace together. And indeed, if we should set this single Passion aside, Mankind would become a Herd of Goats and Satyrs ; there would be no Order or Government, no Distinction of Blood or Families, no Care or Provision for Children, but the whole Race of rational Beings would become more Beasts than the Cattle of the Field. And this seems to me to be the Reason why God did implant (since the Fall at least) this Pudicity in Mankind alone ; because he designed Matrimonial Cohabitation, and a Distinction of Families amongst Men, which he did not among Beasts, when he allowed them promiscuous Commixtures. Now, this natural Shame-



Shame-facedness is as it were Nature's Check to all rash and precipitate Love, which being afforded in a greater Degree to the Female Sex, does respite any indiscreet and unequal Proposals among young People, till such time as the more mature and wiser Judgment of Parents may interpose. Therefore I much wonder why so many of our Youth of both Sexes should purposely endeavour, by a vicious Conversation, and an affected bold Deportment, to destroy their inbred Modesty, which is so very natural, and withall so exceeding beautiful; for Impudence, tho' it cannot blush, is ten times more ugly and shameful than the greatest Shame-facedness. So *Diogenes*, seeing a young Man troubled at his being put out of Countenance by a confident Man, *Be not concerned*, says he, *for this is the Colour of Virtue*. But I am afraid, a great many think Virtue to be of another Colour, when they make all their Actions look of so different a Hue: For how can one reconcile with natural Modesty those obscene Jest, which are the frequent Themes of Virgin Tongues; who take themselves to be most witty when they are most bold, and do only laugh at that which should in all Reason make them blush? It is a sad Sign of the prevailing Immodesty of the Age, that one can hardly hear a good Tune, but the Obscenity of the Words is more grating to the Ears, than the Music is melodious. Our common Dances are a sort of Anti-Pyrrhic ones, and resemble the Camp of *Venus*,

as others did those of *Mars*. Nay, our very Makers and Actors of Plays are wont to excuse the Immodesty of them by the Humour of the Age, which will bear nothing more serious; and hardly any thing is more common, than to see Persons of reputed Virtue and Honour, sit admiring Spectators at such Plays, from which *Cato* would have run away faster than from the *Floralia*: Nay, farther, in some Places it is accounted a Piece of Breeding, and a taking Quality, in the Prophet's Phrase, to have *Eyes full of Adultery*; where the Looks and Actions of Virgins are frequently such, as would in ancient Times have deflowred a Vestal. But hold! It is not my Business here to Satyrize upon the Age, but only to recommend Modesty, which we ought to shew in all our Words and Actions, not to speak any thing which doth in the least favour of Filthiness or Obscenity, rather to lose our Jest than our Reputation, and to part with a lewd Company sooner than our own Innocence; to use no Actions which betoken any Lasciviousness or Impurity, but rather to chuse to be taxed with an ill-bred Shamefacedness, than with an unchristian Impudence.

Having now briefly touched upon the Heinousness of Adultery with regard to both Parties, let us now turn our Eyes upon our great Adulterer, and see how miserably defective he is in his Duty to God and himself,  
which

which will strike every thinking Man with Horror and Concern: For he durst not pray, because he cannot (~~with us~~) call God *Our Father*, to whose Will he acts so repugnant. He must not say, *hallowed be thy Name*, because he is a signal Instance of unhallowing it. He cannot desire his *Kingdom to come*, because he is not prepar'd to receive it. He cannot say, *thy Will be done*, because he does not desire it. He must be ashamed to ask for his *Daily Bread*, when he so little deserves it. He cannot say, *Forgive me my Trespases*, because Forgiveness is promised on Repentance, which he has no Design to exercise. He must have an amazing Impudence to desire not to be *led into Temptation*, when it is his chief Aim to be continually in the Way of it. He must not petition to be *delivered from Evil*, because he cannot expect to be heard. In short, he durst not pray, and he cannot praise God, for every Time he attempts it, it is a downright Mockery. He may go to Church, and join in its Prayers and Praises, but it can be only to triumph in his Wickedness: He may receive the Sacrament, but it can be only to laugh at the Institution. After this, I think, one may reasonably imagine him to be one of the Fools mentioned by the wise Man, who makes a Mock at Sin, and sacrilegiously tramples upon Virtue. When a Wretch, like this, has once made Folly and Wickedness get the Ascendant over Reason and Religion; tis impossible, but he must also be very defective in his Duty to himself: He



must live like a Brute; for as Reason makes the Man, such a Violation of it, must destroy its Influence. Since it is generally allowed, that Self-love is the predominant Principle in the human Mind, one would think that should determine a Man to consult his own Happiness, and not to act so repugnant to it, as the Adulterer must; for every Indulgence of his Passion ('tis true) gratifies his Desire for the present, but entirely disqualifies him to take Pleasure in that which God Almighty has designed as the Reward of Virtue, which is a tranquil Mind resulting from an applauding Conscience, and which is the necessary Effect of Reflection on a past well-spent Life. Now the Adulterer can have none of these pleasing Reflections, being guided only by Passion instead of Reason, so that he is continually hurried into Anger, Rage, and every other Vice.

I think I have, as briefly as I could, shewn the Weakness of this Great Man's Excuse for his Sin, under the first Head; and under the Second, display'd the Heinousness of Adultery in both Parties; and likewise shewn how miserably defective a Great Adulterer must be in his Duty to God and himself; I shall now endeavour to divert you from this melancholy Scene, by bestowing some Encomiums upon Virtue, as are worthy a Great Man's Observation, which is the third and last Thing I propos'd to speak to.

Vir.



Virtue stands in need of nothing but itself ; it renders Man illustrious in this Life, and glorious after Death : 'Tis not Gray-hairs that begets Respect, but a Life virtuously passed confers Glory. It's a strange Fatuity in Man, that he never takes thought how to *live virtuously*, but is very careful how to *live long* ; when it lies in the Power of Man to *live well*, but it is out of his Power to *live long*. It is the *Bounty of Nature* that we *live*, but of *Virtue* that we *live well*. An honest virtuous Man lives not to the World, but to his own Conscience ; he, as the Planets above, steers a Course contrary to that of the World. It is no small Pleasure for a virtuous Person to say to himself, Could a Man enter and see into my Heart, yet should he not find me guilty either of the Affliction or Ruin of any body, nor culpable of Envy or Revenge, nor tainted with Innovation, Sedition, or Schism, nor spotted with the falsifying my Word ; I have always lived upon my own, all my Desires have been terminated within myself. Therefore I take care that the bright Lustre of my Virtues may enlighten the whole Sphere wherein I move.

You may receive Honours, but that is to be gallant in Livery ; it is Virtue that is the only Nobility. I love Virtue in any Man, for it will secure me against any wrong from him, and will assure me of his good Wishes, if he cannot lend me his Assistance. A  
vir-

virtuous Person looks upon the whole World as his Country, and upon God to be as Witness and Judge of his Words and Deeds; he so governs his Life and Thoughts, as if the whole World were to see the one and to read the other. He never opens the Door to the least Evil, for fear others which lie in Ambush should come after: He is much of the Nature of the Sun, which passeth thro' many Pollutions, yet remains pure as before: He stands not more in awe of other Men than of himself, nor commits more Offences tho' no Man were to know them, than if all Men were to observe them. Crimes, tho' they may be secret, can never be secure; nor doth it avail an Offender to be concealed from himself. If I do nothing but what is honest, let all the World know it; but if otherwise, what doth it signify to have nobody know it, so long as I know it myself? Sin is its own Torment, and the fear of Vengeance pursues those who escape the Stroke of it; for Nature hath set up Racks and Gibbets in the Consciences of vicious Persons. He who is guilty of any enormous Sin, lives in perpetual Terror, and whilst he expects to be punished, he punishes himself; and whosoever deserves it, expects it: What, if he be not detected? He is still in Apprehension that he may.

Men love the Evil in themselves, yet no Man loves it in another; and tho' a Man may be a Friend to Sin, yet Nobody loves the Sinner.

Sinner. Mankind is entred into a sort of Confederacy against Virtue; it is dangerous to be honest, and only profitable to be vicious. We live in the rust of the Iron Age; Piety itself is in Exile, Integrity gone, and the Branches of the most flourishing Virtues are all lopped: Were you led in Triumph, you may bear the same Mind, and be as great as the Conqueror: If you are placed amongst Emperors, or amongst Beggars, let not the one make you proud, nor the other ashamed. Virtue hath an illustrious Theatre to shew itself in all Fortunes; a Man that is condemned, if he be innocent, and doth not vex, exercises the Virtue of Patience; if he be guilty, and acknowledges himself so, he co-operates with Justice.

A wicked Man is afraid of his own Memory, and in the Review of himself he finds only Appetite, Avarice, or Ambition. Vice hath its certain Period, after which it becomes desperate and incurable. Those who least practise Virtue in outward Appearance, cunningly make it the Mark whereunto all their Actions level; there must be the Signature of Virtue on the worst of Actions, otherwise they would not be passant, and receive Entertainment. Virtuous Persons are by all good Men openly revered, and even silently by bad; so much do the Beams of Virtue dazzle even unwilling Eyes. You must labour and climb the Hill, if you will arrive at Virtue, whose seat is upon the Top of it; it is



a great Encouragement to well-doing, that when you are once in the Possession of Virtue, it is your own for ever.

If your Mind at any time seems to stagger, and be in suspense what to do, fix on some grave and good Man, and suppose him always present with you, and do all Things as if he looked on; then because of the Reverence you bear to him, you will fear to offend or act any thing that is ill, lest he should find fault with it. Every Night call yourself to an Account, what Infirmary you have mastered to Day? By this Scrutiny your Vices will abate of themselves, and yourself become better and more virtuous. You may be honest in the dark, and virtuous without a Witness; you may have such an inbred Loyalty to Virtue, as to serve her without a Livery. Let Integrity be the Ballast of your Soul, and Virtue the Lading: You may be deprived of Honours and Riches against your Will, but not of your Virtues except you consent. Since then Virtue appears thus amiable, let us steadily persevere in the Cause of it, which will entitle us to that Eternity of Happiness, where is *Fulness of Joy, and at God's Right Hand, Pleasures for evermore.*

F I N I S,